

P.T. Forsyth
 "Regeneration, Creation, and Miracle"
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REGENERATION, CREATION, AND MIRACLE.

BY PRINCIPAL P. T. FORSYTH, D.D.

WHAT do we mean when we not only speak (as we do) of the doctrine of the new creation in Christ crucified, but speak of it as being inevitable to a spiritual veracity,¹ an ethical thoroughness, or a penetrative moral imagination?

It belongs to the type of doctrine that is most frequently challenged by those who claim the special custody of such high interests as I have named, and who would rescue for their own idea of positive truth the intelligence that they deem wasted in theological fantasy, or perverted by dishonest accommodations. In many such cases it turns out that our adviser betrays no sign of the experience which is involved, and indeed that he has never studied the ultimate philosophy of *any* experience. He knows little of the history of theology, and nothing of its inner history. And he has no knowledge of the revolution effected in theology through the historical treatment that makes and saves its modern phase. The ethic that he knows, when he knows anything of ethic as it should be known, is apt to be the natural ethic of conduct or virtue, and not the spiritual ethic of the soul of the good, of the holy; or it is the ethic of a distributive justice, and not of a regenerate personality. It may be but a branch of sympathetic sociology. It is not Christian ethic; or, if it is, it is the ethic of

¹It need hardly be said here, perhaps, that by veracity is meant not the habit of telling the truth, but the passion for thinking it, and thinking to a finish and resting in Reality—what Matthew Arnold called "lucidity."

the Christian ideal, and not of the Christian revelation and its experience.

But it is impossible to allow the monopoly of either veracity, "lucidity," or positivity, and the credit of "thinking to a finish," only to minds whose ideas of truth have been formed but on a natural ethic, or on an acquaintance with the sciences often called positive and their logic of research and induction. Nothing can be thorough in its veracity or lucidity which does not take the soul seriously as the greatest of all facts; that is, which does not deal with it as it is before the last reality, where that is supremely revealed as its God. Even, when scientific logic rises to the scale and range of a philosophy, we may but find ourselves consigned by it to a system whose data are only the five barley loaves of the senses, without any miraculous action upon them. Against all this we have to urge that moral history and the experience of the spiritual world supply data no less positive, and much more live and pregnant, than those of the natural world. An urgent and earnest veracity will not consent to have its attention arrested on the empirical aspect of human nature. It presses on to factors which do not reside there, but only emerge, and emerge by an action which is much more in the nature of divine inspiration from a creative fullness than of subliminal eruption from congestion and crisis. The doctrine of a new creation in Christ is central to a theology which, from its historic origin, is no less positive in its unique data than any science, and no less inevitable and sequential to moral and intellectual veracity. No monopoly of that virtue is held by the abstract rationalism that reigns with equal force and fatality in rigid scientific positivism and in strict theological orthodoxy. The reign of law may be in its tone physical with the *savants*, or forensic with the orthodox; but it is in both equally destructive of that element of life, freedom, and faith, which is at least as potent as force or fate in the history and experience of the race. "The proof of man is in the reproof of fate." There is an historical positivity which is at least as positive, real, and effective for Humanity as the scientific, the juristic, or the economic.

Let us approach the matter from another quarter, from the history of modern thought on the subject. The great theological influence which broke the ban of a forensic orthodoxy and a

cultured rationalism was Schleiermacher, whose appearance in this science is comparable to that of Darwin, or even Bacon, in another sphere. The fundamental principle introduced in Schleiermacher was the return to nature and experience. Only it was the new nature and the new experience of the Christian who has not only touched but tasted the last reality, and who is a Christian in spirit and in truth, and not by mere courtesy, or as an ethical type. And yet there are whole regions of religious thought, not to say whole Churches, hardly touched by this principle. I say nothing of those scientific trippers who take an occasional vacation in theology, as they would in an attractive country whose language and literature they do not know, and then write about their travels. But the effect of the great movement I describe has hardly reached the Anglican Church, for instance. The Anglican Church, with all its splendid piety, does not strike the full chord of New Testament faith. It is too Catholic in its quality, too æsthetic and too little moral. It is too patristic or too scholarly; or it is too philosophic on belated Hegelian lines; or too scientific, as science goes in the middle register of things. It is scriptural in the Erasmic, academic sense; and it is too little scriptural in the massive Evangelical sense to have taken its proper place in the moralizing of theology, and therefore of life, and especially of the life of culture or affairs. Its genius, like all Catholicism, is more æsthetical than ethical, as its cultus develops dutiful reverence more than filial worship. It is not quite at home in the language of the great Christian paradox of grace, which is the great moral paradox of reality. And it is too exigent of the simplicity and clarity that goes with the æsthetic or classic idea of a perfection more symmetrical than saved, more harmonious than reconciled. Some of its most fine and eager spirits can write a delightful, vivid, and liberal volume⁸ on the deepest things, which yet has not in principle outgrown the extreme æsthetic of Hegelianism. It is too unfamiliar with spiritual seismology. It has taken to heart Green and Caird more than William James. It has little trace of the moral crisis in Redemption. An afterwash of baptismal regeneration blinds it to the moral wealth and theological resource in conversion. And

⁸Foundations. Oxford, 1912.

it shows no trace of commanding spirits in modern theology like Schleiermacher or Rothe (whom it names, but in a quotation from some one else in a note). It still rests its Incarnation in a metaphysic, subliminal or other; and it does not find it, as the New Testament does, on the work of an atoning Redemption whose experience founds the Church and all its worship and thought. We wonder sometimes why that great and glorious Church as a whole (for we allow for the great social work of Green and his disciples) is so much less than it should be a moral power, leader, and guide in the tense new situation of the society around it. And the answer is, in part, that the foundation of its creed is metaphysical rather than moral, and the genius of its broad effect is but too true to that Catholicism, with its defect of moral initiative and its excess of æsthetic culture, its defect of motive and its excess of sedative, its lack of great gospel and its extravagance of good form. And this acts in another way. It drives its Free Church critic into protest from the ethical side, but a protest robbed of the power and mass which Catholicity could supply if the contribution of each were pooled, and the Nonconformist conscience thus protected from its tendency to a hectic note and its danger of mock heroics.

The rationalism of orthodoxy and that of philosophy both gave way a century ago to a vast new influence, corresponding, on the one hand, to the new cosmic sense of Science, and, on the other, to the new sense of Humanity in the revolution. The cosmic form of the Revival rose to its height in Hegel, with his dialectic process of the developing idea; the humane side of it took shape in a new recourse (rising in Kant, led by Schleiermacher, and developed thoroughly through Hoffmann by Ritschl) to moral history—the history of the moral soul in its most crucial experience as the locus of revelation—and to a new experience as the answer to such revelation. If modern philosophy was born there in Kant, so also was the modern view of history in religion, as revealing not the ideal process but the spiritual foundation of the world. A theology of revelation, faltering on the now hollow ground of Scripture infallibility, was but the more broadly based upon a new historical interpretation of the Bible, of dogma, of the world and the soul. The old supernaturalism, resting as it did, with one foot, on an impossible theory of verbal inspiration,

and, with the other, upon a metaphysic of things instead of personality, society, and history, fell down. The tradition, indeed, still continues to stand in some of the more closely organized Churches, and in those secluded from modern influences by immersion in a false conception of authority in Church or Bible. But they are hollow shells of ruined towers that let heaven be seen through their cracks rather than their windows. A theology, free and independent both of philosophy and of scholastic, now comes to its own. Its watchword is, Back to the saving facts that created both the Bible and the Church, that gave a new life to the old philosophies, and that have their continuity in the Church's experience of the Spirit. Back to the facts and powers that made Christians, that made them Christian, and that carry the distinctive power and genius of the faith in them always. Back to history, to a history that *created* in us Eternal Life, because it sprang from the eternal power in His supreme, practical, historic *miracle* of Grace. Theology had been (what it still is very powerfully in many quarters) too little historical and too much national—whether the notions were those of metaphysic, or those of jurisprudence. Slain by the notions, it must be raised up by history, by the saving facts rescued from the saving schemes for their free saving power. It must become the exposition of its own unique and creative fact by that fact's intrinsic light and power. The creative historic Reality must be expounded by a mind that has experienced its creative change. The autonomy has been declared of religion altogether, and especially of the Christian revelation in the soul of Christ and his Gospel. The Bible is the history, not of Israel, but of redemption. It is the record, not to say the sacrament, of an historic new creation; and it is not an arsenal of proof-texts for a system which it is salvation to receive on some other authority—that of the Church as infallible or of a literary miracle like a Bible verbally inspired. Revelation is identified with Redemption; it is no mere manifestation, or the deploying of an ideal process; it is God's practical intervention as a person for personal regeneration. And the supreme authority for the soul, and therefore for the world, is one to be felt and owned only by the redeemed. The real saints are the judges of the real world.

In this view Christ is not a functionary of salvation, but the

Saviour, by the universal act and finished victory in his own personality. He is (by a fundamental mystery yet richly to be explored) a life at once historic for us and experienced by us—the Lord the Spirit, a positive, historic, warring, and creative person, achieving in his universal soul the timeless act of moral victory which is the last stage and exercise of Creation. He thus becomes (and not merely produces), by the moral mysticism of regeneration, a new experience in his believers. The key to his incarnation is not in speculative theories, but in the achievement of an absolute moral victory, racial and final, which functions in us as his regenerative work.

Within the historic Christ himself Schleiermacher broke down the barrier set up by orthodoxy between his life and his death, his active and his passive obedience. His death was not a *din-gliche Leistung*, detachable from his life, a quittance compensatory and preliminary to salvation, a something merely factual and ponderable, which could be put into the scale opposite to human guilt (treated as a like entity), and could more than weigh it down. Rather, his death made the moral consummation and crowning triumph of his whole moral life which executed sin in human nature. His personal conflict and victory was the essential thing in his work. As the perpetual achievement of holiness at every trial in a rising scale, it was the one offering pleasing to God, and supremely so in his death where the tragedy of the universal conscience rose to become the theodicy of God. It was in line, though not in kind, with all spiritual heroism, and it effected (in a way I shall shortly try to show) a new creation in history, at once moral and mystical, individual and universal. It was not the lodgment with God of a forensic preliminary or deposit, but a crisis in the nerve and marrow of human history taken as the conscience writ sharp and large. It was not a further fact, in a series of other facts in Israel's career, which formed an historic postulate of God's grace; but it was the present action of that grace itself. *It did not procure grace, but gave it effect.* It was God at this gracious work, not waiting to be gracious. It was his grace in historic and decisive operation, it was not an external and prior contribution which made the action of grace possible. Christ's office was much more than official; it lay within his own personal and moral vocation. Into the fellowship of that act the

Christian soul was taken up in the congenial act of faith; and he was entered, by such faith, as a freeman of Christ's consciousness of God. The supreme function of Christ was not to suffer a penal necessity, as in the forensic theories. It was active. It was freely and fully to obey, and only thus to honor God's free holiness. The suffering was divine as an act, as an act of holy obedience and not mere heroic submission, as a moral act and not a mere resignation. Mere suffering and mere resignation to it is not redemptive. Christ offered to sinful man's holy God the only satisfaction holiness could receive—a moral satisfaction, a complete, answering holiness on the scale of the offending race. It not only came into line with all great moral action in the men and nations that make history, but it was the divine core, and became the divine source, of such action everywhere. Man's one evil, godlessness, was met by man's one good—God with us. The moral nature of God, the Divine holiness, was placed at the center of all the righteousness of history, and all the spiritual triumph of the race. It was from henceforth set at the source of all that man should do in the one thing where (for all his triumphs) he was becoming less and less able to do anything—in the matter of facing God, meeting his judge, and even rising to confidence and communion with him. Man's evasion here is the cowardice behind the great heroisms, the fear that cankers his earthly valor, the failure eating out the heart of his fine achievement.

There is indeed a vast courage in our race to face nature and master fate. Man is indomitable.

Many the powers that mighty be,
But none is mightier than man.

To the forces around him his spirit rises, and he has waged with wind, sea, fire, famine, pestilence, and sword a most gallant war. He has conquered both Poles and is mastering the high air and the deep waters no less than the broad earth. By the practice of a long, long history his courage has been developed in cruel tests to a heredity strain. It becomes a precious entail and racial asset. And it breaks out at times of great crises like battle, accident, or shipwreck, in people whose normal habit of life had given no sign of such resource, or indeed had been morally weak—in a Nelson or in a nurse. It is perhaps less their personal virtue than

the outcrop of the national strain, the spurt of a reserve of power gathered from a wide ancestry and stored at a center interior to individual volition. All this rises, rushes, to meet the antagonism or untowardness of nature, man, or fate. It is the courage to face fate, to war against necessity, to suffer or die as man for man.

But the supreme courage is to face God—not death nor pain, but God. It is the courage of the conscience before its last judge. And for this, natural resource fails whensoever the conscience has risen to realize what it means. The solidary reserve of courage in the race does not reach to this; for it has been little exercised, or exercised under peculiar disadvantages. This is a valor which is not stored in Humanity, but given in Christ. Man's supreme fear was conquered by man's supreme faith—the Son's faith in the Father. Drawing on him we do not draw on essential Humanity, but on God's grace to Humanity. He is our treasure and steward of confidence in this kind. He is the creative Source for an achievement for which man in himself has mostly but a great void. And it is by drawing on Christian resources, on a courage gradually becoming immanent in Christian society, that we have either heart or power to stand, to say nothing of glorying, in God's sight; and in Christ's victory only have we, despite our guilt, communion with God. It is the courage of the Holy before the Holy that rises in us by our union, conscious or unconscious, with a Christ in whom the Holiest was always well pleased. He is the deeper Deity in all the divinity of the race. The divineness we share, the deity we receive. He is as to God what racial power and valor are as to nature and man. The heroes in this vein are such as those who, by faith in him, gather poor, weak, dying people around them in the hour of calamitous death as a hen gathers her chickens. A simple stewardess in a wreck calls a crowd of frantic people around her as the ship goes down in the wild twilight, lifting them, in her hymns and in prayer and its power, to commune with the Unseen that walks the stormiest waters of the world.

This righteousness, this holiness of God, was shown by the modern departure to be the redeeming and saving thing in Christ's personality and its action. Its sphere was his own moral conflict, in which his real victory was also the victory of the race and for

it. Man's one evil was mastered by God's one man in the Armageddon of His soul. And the effect was not simply the repair, but the consummation, of what creation began. It was the new creation of creation. It was God at his most godlike work. It was the founding, by a moral re-creation, of a new Humanity as high above the old as that old, by its natural creation, was above nature. In a word, reality, salvation, theology, was moralized and sublimated in the act. Metaphysic, and especially traditional metaphysic, was shown to a second place. It was not banished, but it did not lead, and it did not prescribe. Life, experience, with its reality, took the place of the speculative quest of reality. The doctrine, for instance, of the two natures in Christ, if it was not dismissed, was put aside till it could be interpreted by a metaphysic rather than a metaphysic, by a metaphysic of personality instead of substance, drawn from moral experience rather than Hellenistic thought. This is a change so great that it has not yet had time to work out its moral consequences on society, even the society of the Church, and its social consequences are very great. The effect of a central mobilization on such a scale is bound to be great upon society everywhere as its influence comes to be felt. It is but slowly making its way.

But a serious obstacle to a positive and ethical doctrine of the new creation is presented by the doctrine of the baptismal regeneration of infants. This is bound to have a blinding effect on uncorrected eyes, on the vague general mind, affected by a tone rather than a conviction. It is a metaphysical and nonethical idea which is more dulling to the moral sense of the multitude than the forensic conceptions of atonement. For these have, like all jurisprudence, an ethical genius, though it may be ethic arrested at a partial stage. And the tenacious nature of the metaphysical tradition, with its moral astigmatism is shown in the attempts made by distinguished men to evade the real core of the Incarnation in the Atonement by seeking its locus, not theologically in the ethical nature of personality and its supremely holy action in the redemption of the conscience from guilt, but psychologically in the subliminal cellarage of the soul.

As the result of the new movement which spread from Schleiermacher, and flooded the theological sky with light during last century, we have secured the conviction of the su-

premacry and fundamentality of history, the hegemony of personality and action, the retirement of speculation before a positive experience created by history, the creativity of the saving facts, the organic personal unity in Christ's life and death of active obedience, at once crowning and creative, and the conception of the history of the race as a moral unity and a moral organism, destined to a corporate personality round the public person of Christ.

Now if we take these last two results, the organic and personal unity of Christ's own life and work along with the organic and moral unity of the human race as the crown of creation—we are driven to seek the relation, if there is any, between them. What, on the one hand, was the reality in the unity of Christ's person? Nothing less than his holy soul and conscience—a moral reality, conceivable only in personal terms of conflict and victory in a moral warfare which is the true human tragedy. And what, on the other hand, is the reality of Humanity as a unity, the true continuity of the race, the central nusus and issue of history? Is it not also a moral reality and a moral issue? It is not mere civilization, but moral personality. Is anything so central and potent for the race as its conscience, however splendid the sphere of imagination or achievement may be around it? Is Butler not on the firmest ground when he says that morality is the nature of things? Goodness is reality.

And, if we so judge, are we not ready for the next step? Are we not forced to it? Is the holiness of Christ not the ultimate nature of morality, and therefore of things? Is not the conscience within the conscience, the conscience of God himself? Is it not his absolute righteousness in an historic person, judging all the earth? Is it not the outcrop of the moral stratum on which all creation, all being, rests, and which every evolution or convulsion is bringing to the top in a kingdom of souls, of righteousness, and of God? Was Humanity not there presented before God as what it essentially is, is in its divine purpose and destiny, is in the creative Will—as perfectly holy and humane? Was the unity and sanctity of Christ's life-work not in central, moral, organic connection there with the unity which we have recognized a moral humanity to be? His achievement was a personal victory; was it for his own person alone? Did it not anticipate, condense, and

insure the moral victory also of that Humanity with which it was his Divinity to be in such perfect sympathy and continuity? Was he not there as central to man whom he saves as man is to the universe that he understands? Was Christ not thereby the reality which permeates and subdues by its eternal moral act the collective personality which is the reality of man? Subdues, I say, and not merely consummates. And I say by his moral act, and by no mere magic change, and by no mere infusion nor infection of a metaphysical substance. It is no accidental connection, no mere parallelism, no mere arbitrary or external relation, between Christ in his triumphant agony and man in his guilt and grief. The Reconciliation of the Cross is the fundamental moral crisis of a world which is at last moral *or nothing*. Only it is a crisis and a reconciliation effected and not merely illustrated, in this its greatest case but also its greatest cause. Christ's person was creative and not expository. His work was in the nature of moral achievement, not of necessary process. And it was concrete with living history and organic with the new Humanity. It was a real fact, a thing done and not merely handled, done under the conditions of a *free* social evolution, as personal development must be; done under the conditions of personality, individual or corporate; not therefore a thing presented but a deed performed, not (that means) taking place under the relations of necessity, but under those of moral freedom, and its social triumph, and its creative worth.

For moral victory by holy obedience is both a social and especially a *creative* thing in the nature of it. It increases the power of the race. It increases the moral weight of the universe. No such victor conquers for himself alone. He adds to man's permanent power and value. Is it not so, more or less, in every case of it? It is not simply a transmutation of existing energy, nor is it simply the gain of another fort by the rising tide of an evolutionary process under necessary law. It has the specific quality and *differentia* of a moral achievement. And that is not a mere resultant of antecedent forces, tendencies, or powers. It has in its center and essence something creative, something new and additional. Moral victory means new power that was not in the soul before. Thought is not creative, but moral action is. It has to do, not with new insight, nor even new combinations, but with

a new energy and direction of will. It really enriches life and the world. It draws far more directly than any mere force does from the Creator's distinctive action. It is truly creative, in the only sense in which creation has any meaning for our experience.*

I have been trying to show that the work of Christ was a moral victory, and that the acquirement of his own soul was in the same act the new creation of the race. I have claimed that such victory everywhere has a creative element in it, whose foregleam was in the natural freedom of will (however restricted) which makes man a responsible being. But with a perfect and unsullied victory like Christ's we have that freedom made absolute, *i. e.*, perfectly holy, and therefore final, as in perfect union with the last reality of things. He realized, in obedience, the glorious liberty of the Son of God. But the perfectly holy is the Creator; so that Christ's work was above all creative. It had not simply a creative element in it, as our moral victories have, but it was the crowning act of the Holy One on a first creation's wreck. It was the work of the God who created man for the active commission of His own holiness, and who carried creative action to its last form, its true close, and its inner significance by the Cross; so that Christ's work was the new creation for which the first was made, and not merely the last wave of the first. He did not simply pour a new stream of the old divine vitality into the current of history, but he did a thing in its course more crucial than when the first chaos was ended. The true image would not be the in-

*The contention that real moral action has, in the initiative which is its distinctive mark, an element of the creative may be put otherwise thus: "My Father worketh, and I work," said Christ. If, then, God's work is preëminently creative, so is Christ's. Now by our Christian union with Christ we share his work, his activity. For our relation to him is not merely passive. Therefore in our own way we participate in his creativity. And we do so by that which puts and keeps us in union with him—by our faith, which is an active thing. But our faith is essentially obedience, the obedience of our will to his saving will and work, obedience to him as his was to the will and work of God. That is, it is our supreme moral act. Our great moral act, therefore, as Christians sharing as it does his work, is in its nature creative. It is a fresh contribution to the moral wealth of the race and the moral assets of the world. And we have in this supreme moral act the key to the true inner nature of moral action everywhere. The paradoxical combination of entire selflessness and supreme will-power was the secret of Christ for our new creation. And it is our secret also in all the action which pro- longs his and reflects the new creation.

flux of a great tributary, but a tremendous cataract negotiating an abyss, and at the gorge of the fall the river turns sharply in a new course. The whole drift and religion of the race are changed. It is not acted on by new forces, it is taken possession of by a new spontaneity of the moral and not merely the vital kind. It is invaded and occupied by another personality, whom we not only own but welcome. We yield and coöperate with the tragic, crucial, glorious conquest in which His whole personality, dying and rising, forever acts. "The very citadel of personality is invaded. An *alter ego* appears where before the *Ego* sat enthroned. And the *Ego* loves to have it so." "There is a *degree* of intimacy at which a difference of *kind* appears." As, when we fall in love, one, who before was but *a* personality beside us, becomes *the* personality within us, and through us, and for us. We are something higher in the scale of life than a mere human being—we are Christians. There is a new life for us. We are born again. "The Christian is a human personality of which the Head, Center, and Completion is Christ. He lives in so far as Christ lives in him. Not that he loses his own individuality; for the 'twoness of the One' is as essential to spiritual life as the 'One-ness of the two.'"

The death and resurrection of Christ was his taking possession of Humanity as a fellow-soul takes possession of our own, to be a mere fellow-soul no more. And the analogy is specially close when the capture of us is not like natural love, a case of mystic instinct without necessary moral action on us. But it is as when we owe to our benefactor's concern and sacrifice our rescue from ruin. If the soul of Christ was as great as the race (and it must have been, to cope with *the* evil of his race), his sinless self-mastery and his achievement of perfect obedience to a holy God was the divine holiness itself at work (since only the Holy is self-sufficient for the Holy). It was the divine holiness in its central nature and creative action within the race, on a plane which by the first creation was only prefigured and prophesied.

Creation, miracle, and prayer, are all powers in this strain and in this train. The theories that take the life of one of these

destroy also the rest; and it is another universe we then contemplate, another world we live in, another religion we cherish—if indeed anything is still left that should be called a religion at all. For miracle is creation. There is a “creative synthesis” in the very recasting of the causal chain, its deflection, the determination of existing forces in a new direction. It is an addition in kind to the causal chain, an insertion. The old forces are all at work, but what causes their convergence to a certain point in experience? However close the causal tissue may be, it is not impervious. A due respect to the causal conditions is yet not abject. The Kingdom of God comes in through the interstices of all other causality. And the answer to prayer is lawful miracle. Even if we do not go beyond what is called the reflex action of prayer, what we have there is not an auto-suggestive sedative, but the appropriation of creative power. It is a supreme exercise and experience of a quite new life, in which we draw on the power distinctive of God and share it in our relative way. All these great things have their meaning in that life, in the new creation in Christ. That breach with the old life in the new birth which is the fontal Christian experience tunes the mind to the miraculous idea. The radical rent in the natural soul makes credible such invasion of the natural world. They are explicable, only if we start with the life really new, only if we carry with us the experiences and the categories given us there, only if we refuse to begin with an empirical and mechanical universe, or even an ideal process. They belong to a view of the world which is, above all, life, and neither sense nor thought. And, above all, it is dramatic life. Life is determined by its collisions and crises more than by its order, by action more than process. Every now and then we meet views of the world and methods of treating it which are of immense ability and interest, and which do much to modify or illuminate certain regions of our conception, yet missing is—what? They have not the eye. They have purview, they have new combination. What they have not is insight; or, if insight, then not faith, not the one great moral venture; being full of *Geist*, even of genius, but not full of the Holy Ghost—which yet either fills the world from depth to height or is an empty dream.

Much of the inability to associate creation, and especially the new creation, with the idea of reality is due, first, to the impossi-

ble assertion that it is a creation out of nothing. That is impossible, because, if God is in any sense all and in all, there never was a nothing out of which the creature should rise. Besides, we have no faculty, nor any analogy, to give, as the least conception of what an emergence from nothing could mean. And, being thus meaningless, it is unreal to us.

But the chief reason for the unreal nature, to many, of such an idea as creation, lies in the fact that we think of it as an arbitrary act of God, as something he might have done or not, just as the mood took him, or the idea occurred. And whatever is thus arbitrary, not to say whimsical, is unreal, no matter on how vast a scale.

Here our standpoint is everything. If we start, as the *sequence* of life starts, from the empirical, the mechanical, or even the idealist view of the world, our mind must be a blank as to anything real corresponding to a word like creation. But, if we start, as the *principle* of life starts, with what is prime rather than what is prior, from the view of the world which makes personality and its distinctive power—action—to be the supreme category; if we start with personality and its crucial action as the one created thing, and the multiplication and nurture of moral personality as the purpose of all we see and feel, all the scaffolding we call nature—then we are not quite without an experience which can give content to such a notion as creation. (Unless, of course, we banish the order of experience called moral experience as no real datum, and treat the supreme form of it, the Christian, as illusion, valuable in a way but only as fictive ideas are—as formulæ for the manipulation of life, which can be dismissed when we reach a result.)

As we view the first creation from the experience of the second, and its principle, it is not arbitrary, it is anything but whimsical. It is, for such a God of Love as Christ reveals and we answer in the spirit, a moral necessity. As God and Father he must create—by no brute necessity, but as a necessity of his personal spiritual nature. Yet by a real necessity none the less, though by a necessity whose action is perfect freedom. There is no necessity so urgent, irresistible, and universal as the pressure of moral freedom. And creation is the action of an absolute, universal

freedom, charging its area with entire and concrete fullness. It is freedom, not only free but rich. It is Love.

For what was the Redemption itself, which drew God from heaven to earth, but the necessity in the one and only Free to establish the perfect freedom and fullness of his life for his world, a free fullness in material and not only in form, in a wealth and not only a range, as holiness and not mere amplitude, as holy Love.

The freedom of God, therefore, was not a freedom to create or not create. That were a freedom very elementary, arbitrary, and for him unreal. It were to introduce something accidental into him. And the relation between him and his world is not accidental. His world is not merely the best possible, perhaps but a second best. He did not deliberate, pick, and choose among possible worlds, and then decide on the fittest. That were too anthropomorphic. Within a created world indeed diverse possibilities might be presented to him by himself as means to an end, means contingent on the free behavior of the creature; but he could not present to himself worlds good and less good for his own selection as ends. If he could but choose the best, he could but think the best. And we cannot suppose that he had to adjust himself and his action to the thought of another. When we say that he made the world by an act of will and choice, we mean to deny that he did it from any external coercion, internal poverty, or blind instinct. His freedom is the freedom of his own full and self-sufficient nature. His determination was self-determination. No necessity lay on him from without. The other that he needed and created in his world was still within himself. It was his own Other, not an other in any rivalry. He was determined into creation by his own self and nature alone—which is true freedom, if we have taken pains to understand what personality and its distinctive freedom are.

The necessity that moved him was the freest power we know, or the power most creative of freedom. I have named it. It was Love. Love, which is always at the origin of new existence, and is always the matrix of new birth, was the motive power of the first creation, as we know it to be of the second—Love, where, if anywhere, true freedom lies, and the need to create it in responsive personalities. His Holy Love would not only be per-

fectly met in his Uncreated Son, but really multiplied in his sons create. Creation was the creation of personality capable of answering Love in its manifold freedom; all else in creation is but the machinery to carry out that work, and may disappear when it is done. This is a view which is supported by the modern conception of matter as energetic in its constitution, as energy under intense condensation, as more or less spiritual, therefore, and congenial to spiritual purpose.

The one object of creation is souls. We go in quite at the wrong end when we start with our interest preoccupied with the creation of matter. The soul with its freedom is the only truly created thing. It is the key of creation, especially in its re-creation. It is the true asbestos which survives, and which profits by the fire of all the timbering used in its construction. Nature is the divine alloy which enables the soul to be worked; but it is dissipated by something equally divine when the soul has been shaped. Nature, therefore, may be God in immanence, in a sense in which he is not immanent in Will, and cannot be without extinguishing its freedom.

God's immanence stops, not indeed at the constitution of human nature, but at its will and freedom. It is the moral soul (whose creation is the miracle of a conferred freedom) that alone realizes God in his free transcendence. Only freedom can understand freedom—only our transcendence of Nature can appreciate God's transcendence of us. God must create if he is the Love that redeemed. If his supreme gift is redeemed freedom, the base of that is created freedom, which (natural yet supernatural) is the only created thing. Love is true life and its infinite increment in souls. The whole world is the ascending scale of God's creative Love, "arriving" in the freedom in which alone Love is itself.

Hackney College, London.